

Paws to Dance



The Newsletter of the Canine Freestyle Federation, Inc.

November 2020

Teamwork – Human Half of the Team

By Shari Bryant

In the late 90s, I was showing my sheltie in obedience. She qualified in matches; she even got High In Match a couple of times. However, in our first trial, she ran laps around the ring during the off lead heeling. We did not qualify. Why did she do so well in matches, but could not perform at the trial? I suspect my stress affected her ability to perform. I was not nervous at the matches, whereas at the trial I was very nervous.

We took a break from obedience trials. She knew how to do the exercises, so apparently it was the human half of the team that needed work. I spent time learning how to be relaxed in a trial. Next time I entered she scored a 195 and got High In Trial. When I was relaxed, she was able to perform.

One of my long-term goals has been that my dogs perform as well in a trial as they do in practice. However, for that to happen, I have to be as relaxed at a trial as I am in practice. It's been a journey and I am still far from perfect. There are times where nervousness and stress creep in, but I am more aware of it now and I have better skills to deal with it. *That Winning Feeling! A New Approach to Riding Using Psychocybernetics* by Jane Savoie is a book that was recommended to me and has been a great resource. It's written for those that show horses, but the strategies the author shares for dealing with nervousness and stress work for dog sports too. I still read parts of the book before each trial.

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A month or two before a trial, I spend quiet time each day visualizing our presentation being performed perfectly. Also, I write down what is important regarding that trial and I read it often, and I put key points on an index card to refer to on the day of the trial. The things I write down include:

A goal: Some of my goals have been “engagement”, “a positive experience for my dog” “fun”. My goal is something I feel fairly confident we can achieve. I write out a description of what the goal looks like so I have a visual in my mind. There was an instance where Jace and I were practicing in our basement and I thought he had perfect engagement. So, my “engagement” one has “I will practice seeing Jace calm, but with very high drive, and completely focused on me. (Basement)”

A motivation: Some of my motivations have been "Animation and Athleticism", "Graceful and Rhythmic", "Focused and Animated". Often I will come up with a saying, for example, "Jace is the most graceful and elegant dog." I repeat it to myself often and visualize what it looks like in my mind.

The plan: I plan the day including time to arrive, where to set up my dog, when to get my dog out, when to warm up, what to do for the warm up, how we will enter/exit, etc.

What to do when...: I have several of these because stuff happens. I usually know where my dog's challenges are. One of Jace's for Level IV was staying focused and engaged for two and a half minutes or more. So I wrote down "If Jace has a challenge going the duration, help him by asking for behaviors he likes to do, or bow out." By planning "What to do when...", I feel more confident in dealing with issues if they happen because I already have a plan of action in place.

Then I have a variety of sayings that apply to whatever our goals are for the trial. Below are a few examples. These are taken directly from the book mentioned above.

"The joys of competition with your partner are to be fully experienced and savored."

"You are going to go out and show what you have achieved together in training."

"Help the spectator to enjoy the beauty and creativity of two living creatures working harmony."

The most stressful time for me is waiting to enter the performance space. It's a time where I question whether we are prepared. I try to shift that energy from one of dread to one of excitement. So, instead of "Oh no, what if <fill in the blank> goes wrong" to "Oh my gosh, I can't wait. This is going to be so much fun."

We spend a lot of time preparing our dogs for a trial, but we are part of the team too so remember to take some time to prepare yourself. You may find you start to relax and enjoy trials more. Also, you may find your dog relaxes and enjoys trials more as well. Then you may find your teamwork is taken to a whole new level.

Judges Roundtable

Sirius Guild and Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild are hosting a Judges Roundtable via Zoom on December 20 from 2-4 pm. A brief introduction to judging will be provided then the judges will answer members' questions. All questions for the roundtable must be submitted in advance. If you have a question(s) specific to judging, please send your question(s) to Kathy Noble at kathyninmd@aol.com by December 6.

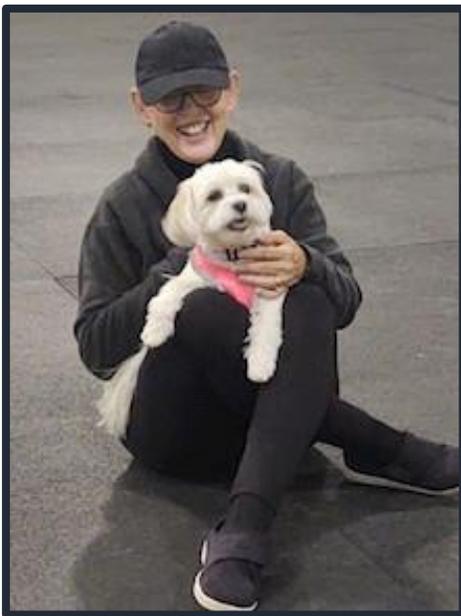
If you plan to attend the Zoom event, please let Shari Bryant at Lunar61@aol.com know so you can receive information on how to join the event. Please Note: The event will be recorded. At this time, it is unclear whether the event will be posted to the Member's section of the CFF website. If you sign up for this Zoom event, you are agreeing to the following video release:

All rights to **TELEVISION, VIDEOTAPE, ADVERTISE, PHOTOGRAPH, PROMOTE** or otherwise exploit this event are vested with CFF, or in persons to whom assignments of such rights have been made in writing by the CFF. All persons or animals participating in this virtual class, workshop, or seminar grant to the CFF the right to photograph, televise, videotape, audiotape, or otherwise use their likeness and voice in any manner without further release or consent. In addition, there will be a recording consent notification when joining the Zoom event.

North Coast Canine Freestylers Guild

By Janet Dayton

We are still able to meet on Friday nights and dog events have continued with covid precautions, in our little corner of the world. Linda and Bella just finished our beginner class. It is always a privilege to be part of a CFF journey. My Lark earned her CD, which gave her a VCD 1 title too. Way to go, Lark! Bridget is working London in flyball and Deb and Malachi are continuing with nosework. Diana just joined Buckeye Tracking Club. We are planning on having our titling event in May. So, mark your calendars and cross your fingers. I hope you are watching the TV talent shows now on. Don't forget to analyze what you see, listen to the critiques, and make connections to what we do. The more exposure to performances and critiques, the more understanding is gained. Just try it.



Linda and Bella



Janet's Lark

For this edition, Diana Simpson is our subject for the "get to know us" member profile. Her current dog is Willow, a greyhound.

What breed(s) have you had? Greyhounds, German Shepherd, Collie mix

How many dogs have you had in your life? 8

Any other pets? Cats

How did you get involved with CFF? Janet begged me.

Best moment with CFF? Getting my first qualifying score with Bunny.

Do you have a goal you are working towards in CFF? Laterals to the right and a Level IV qualifying score

What do you hope people see when you work your dog in a CFF routine? How much Willow enjoys it.

Why do you have a dog in your life? Because they are good company.

What behavior was hardest to train your dog to do? With Willow, getting her interested in picking the dumbbell up and holding it. We are working on it now.

Hobbies/Interests? Swimming, horseback riding, walking/hiking with Willow.

Job(s)? Food service and horse grooming for Hunter Jumpers

Favorite song(s)? Why? I don't really have a favorite song, but I like Carol King, Adele, James Taylor.

Favorite book(s)? Why? Not a favorite book, but I like James Patterson, David Baldacci, John Grisham.

If you could go anywhere, where would you go? Go out to eat, since we haven't been able to.

Do you have a hero or special person you admire? My boss, Howard Lewis when I was grooming horses. It was like having a second dad.

What makes you happy? That's a good question. Doing something with my dog, training and hiking. What would make me happy now is to get rid of Covid.

Sirius Guild

By Kathy Noble

Dancing with a Deaf Dog

Covid-19 has seriously impacted all of us in so many ways, and Sirius Guild has held no classes since the original shutdown in March. Almost all of us are either living with someone who is in the most vulnerable group, or we ourselves are among the most vulnerable. The Washington area folks have gotten together several times outdoors during good weather in a place that is large enough and flat enough to work, but the "getting together" has overshadowed the "work", since all of us have so severely limited our socializing that it has been just plain terrific to be together face to face (even though distantly) in person.

What little DogWork we HAVE done outside has reminded me once again how the limitations that my Golden Retriever Rosie lives with in her every day life so strongly affect her ability to do Freestyle under these imperfect conditions. She is 13 and "mostly" deaf, but still loves Freestyle, though outdoors, she cannot hear the music at all. Amazingly enough, she is not the only dog from Sirius Guild who has danced while deaf; Betty Swenson's Vickie, who recently got her CFF Championship, was also dancing while deaf. Their situations are similar but different, and I thought it might be interesting to share both of their stories.

Rosie decided very early in her life that she was born to do Freestyle, and she took to the training with joy and brilliance, so by the time she was four she had earned her level IV, held back only by my own ring nerves, and so never earning the kind of scores she might have earned otherwise. She came to us at ten weeks of age with a perfect recall, so when at the age of about 9 or 10 she began to wander away and not come when she was



called, I figured we needed to tune up that part of our relationship. The issue became worse, and ultimately I was chagrined to discover when I startled her one day when I approached her from behind, calling all the while, and when I touched her she turned and greeted me with surprise and delight, that she was indeed not hearing me. Oddly, her Freestyle work never suffered, though as time went on I found that I needed to increase the volume of our music in order for her to join in the work with her usual joy. It was when we tried to work outside that it was obvious that she didn't hear the music at all, and I finally realized she was probably FEELING the music vibrations when we worked inside. I no longer expect her to respond to the music on the occasions that we do work outside, and I won't take her to outdoor venues to perform, but she still loves Freestyle and when the music starts, and if she can "feel it", she always asks—no, she demands!—that we should dance.

Betty's experience with Vickie has been similar but different, so I asked her to tell me their story and she agreed to share it; here it is in her words.

My experience with deafness in my partner may be a bit different, as Vickie's hearing loss was not the gradual onset associated with old age but rather a genetic issue in Border Collies called Early Onset Deafness (OED). This comes on fairly quickly, and it took me a while to figure out what was going on.

Vickie is one of those dogs who is always right there with me, watching to make sure she doesn't miss out on anything, so I never have to call her or anything like that. The first inkling of hearing loss, though I did not recognize it as such, was in her herding, where she just wasn't taking directions at a distance - I thought it was a training issue....

She has never been a dog with strong opinions about music, so I have just chosen pieces that suited her movement. Her last routine had been in the works before she went deaf. I estimate the progression from 'hearing OK' to 'totally deaf' took less than a year, but again, I didn't recognize what was going on until late in the game. In our normal training space, she was fine in practice, I assume taking her cues from the performance space. When we got to a titling event, though, she was totally confused and at this point it finally dawned on me that she could not hear.

So we struggled with this for about a year. She needed one more leg for a Championship, and I felt she deserved to earn that so I kept at it. The 2018 trial in Ohio was to be our last try. It wasn't until we got out into the performance space that I decided to give up on any attempt to control the situation, and Vickie literally danced to her own tune, acquiring her final >80 point score.

Having retired from herding & freestyle, Vickie now has a new career as a tracking dog, where deafness is no handicap whatsoever!

When I think about these two dogs' experiences and their ability to continue in Freestyle DogWork even though the music is no longer "there" for them, I know that one of the most wonderful things about Freestyle is the beautiful "buy in" that happens with our dog partners. It makes me wonder sometimes if there are other people out there who are dancing with a deaf dog and not even realizing it.



Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild

By Shari Bryant

We held a couple more classes via Zoom in August and September. We plan to finish the last two sections of the Level I & II scoresheet after the first of the year. If you are interested in attending any of the future Zoom classes, please let Shari Bryant know (Lunar61@aol.com), and notification will be sent when a new Zoom class is scheduled. If you missed one of the previous classes, you can find the

recording in the Members section of the CFF website.

From Barbara Long:

On November 8 Ambrose and I, with a special appearance from Rhona, participated in an online book event featuring freestyle. Laura Elliott has written a young adult novel, *Storm Dog*, about a young girl who rescues a dog and bonds with him training him to perform a freestyle routine in a parade. While researching for the book, Laura came across the CFF Facebook page and watched a video of me and Niamh performing our Level II routine. Laura has always had English Setters and was delighted to see a Gordon performing. She contacted me to see if I could do a routine during the event.

Laura read passages from her book about Ariel finding music for Duke (named after Duke Ellington). Ambrose and I performed an edited version of his Level III since my studio isn't big enough for a regulation ring. I then talked about searching for music and training for a presentation. I was able to demonstrate to the kids how I trained Ambrose to do some of his moves and showed them how they could train their dogs. Rhona made her debut to demonstrate targeting and sitting up to beg. Laura and I answered questions and she closed with reading a passage about the developing relationship between Ariel and Duke and how everyone should dance to their own rhythm. While the freestyle described in the book is not CFF DogWork (think costumes and a chorus line of dogs) it was a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate positive training and the bond that can develop through training.

Mark Your Calendars – Upcoming Events

December 20, 2020

Sirius Guild & Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild – Judges Roundtable

Via Zoom. More information on page 2 of this newsletter.

March 19-21, 2021

Canine Freestyle Federation Event

The **DogWork® Jamboree** will be rescheduled to either Fall 2021 or Spring 2022.

An in-person seminar may be held depending on COVID-19 restrictions in place after the first of the year, or an online event via Zoom may be held. More information coming soon.

May 2021

North Coast Canine Freestylers Titling Event - Chesterland, Ohio

More information coming soon.

Canine Freestyle Federation, Inc. Annual Election

No additional nominations were received to the slate presented in the August 2020 newsletter. The Constitution and By-Laws read: "The election shall be by mail ballot among those nominated."

You may send your digital ballot by email to caninefreestyleorg@gmail.com, which must include your real name in the address or body of the email. These will be due by December 31, 2020.

If you received a printed/paper newsletter please mark your ballot "Yes" to accept the slate and return it by December 31, 2020. The ballot should include your address label from your newsletter. Send to:

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President – Betty Swenson

Treasurer – Carl Tennille

Director for Judges – Janet Dayton

Membership Secretary – Lin Spodak

2021 CFF Annual Dues Notice

Dues are \$25.00. Please renew today! (Your membership expires on December 31, 2020 unless you joined since October 1, 2020 or have a life membership.)

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Please make checks payable to CFF, Inc. and mail to Carl Tennille, Treasurer CFF 14430 Overlook Ridge Lane Beaverdam, VA 23015 or go to CFF website, login to your account and pay via paypal (This is the fastest method.). Instructions to pay through your member account at <https://bit.ly/2GBB0yB> or you can pay via the store. Remember, if you joined in the last quarter of 2020, your dues are not due until December 31, 2021.

In May 1998, CFF filed an Application for Recognition of Exemption under 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code with the IRS. The IRS granted CFF's request in 1999 as exempt from federal income taxes. CFF dues are not deductible for federal income tax purposes as a charitable contribution.

Paws to Dance
c/o Shari Bryant
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Upcoming Events

Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild & Sirius Guild Judges Roundtable, via Zoom, December 20, 2020

Canine Freestyle Federation Event, March 19-21, 2021

North Coast Canine Freestylers Guild Titling Event, Chesterland, OH, May 2021

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